

Examining Transboundary Migration and Its Strategic Implications for Internal Security in Nigeria During the Buhari Administration

Ugochukwu Mmaduabuchi ONWUNYI, Ph.D.¹, Asukwo Asukwo Andem², Obi Innocent Chinedu³

¹Department of Political Science, Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba, Delta State.

²Department of Political Science, Paul University, Awka Anambra State Nigeria.

³Department of Law, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Anambra State, Nigeria.

Article DOI: 10.55677/SSHRB/2025-3050-1205

KEYWORDS: Security, Transboundary Migration, Internal Security, Nigeria, Buhari Administration

DOI URL: <https://doi.org/10.55677/SSHRB/2025-3050-1205>

ABSTRACT: It is truism that Africa at large and Nigeria in particular have continued to experience severe security threats which has been attributed to the effects of globalization evident upon certain links to the activities of illegal migrants. To even think that this particular area has in the past and presently continued to attract attention of scholars, policy makers, security experts as well as security analysts. These threats to national security include activities of Boko Haram, herdsmen as well as incidences of piracy and maritime insecurity. This paper discusses transboundary migration and its implication on internal security in Nigeria. The study relied on relevant secondary sources of data collection. The securitization theory forms the theoretical framework wherein analyses in this study occurred. The theory assumes that threats and vulnerabilities can arise in many different areas, military and nonmilitary, but in order to count as security threats, such threats must meet strictly defined criteria that distinguish them from the normal happenings of mere politics. The unchecked as well as unmonitored or poorly monitored transboundary migration in Nigeria significantly affected internal security under President Buhari. This is true because, Nigeria as a sovereign nation-state should take cognizance of the fact that globalization or openness without control encourages border crimes: smuggling, child and women trafficking, small and light weapons trafficking and trafficking of narcotics across the border. Again, the nomadic movements and activities of the Fulani herders engendered insecurity in Nigeria under President Buhari. The study concludes that irregular migration persists in Nigeria because there is no political will to impose adequate security across Nigeria's international borders; and also, there is the lack of political will to effectively implement the national security strategy. The study recommends that the Federal Government should securitize the issue of irregular migration beyond the normal happenings of mere politics. Thus, border security threats should be treated as existential threats to both national and human security in Nigeria.

Corresponding Author:

Ugochukwu Mmaduabuchi ONWUNYI

Published: December 20, 2025

License: This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

INTRODUCTION

Transboundary migration and Internal security are generally regarded as complex phenomena with many perspectives. In fact, the multidimensionality of the concepts requires special approach and development of measures to secure them. The point of departure is that what affects Transboundary migration also affects internal security and that is why this paper is anchored on the formation and maintenance of internal and external conditions favourable to the realization of sustainable socio-economic development upon which the internal security of any country is built.

Meanwhile, it is pertinent and expedient to understand that Transboundary migration which involves the movement of people from one geographical location to another with the intention of settling temporarily or permanently in the new location is usually motivated by several factors such as famine, war, environmental degradation, economic recession, youths unemployment and

restiveness, lack of respect for the sanctity of human lives, human right abuses and absence of rule of law. The aforementioned factors undoubtedly precipitate human Transboundary migration and equally serve as threat to internal security. Notwithstanding, the perception of Transboundary migration as a threat to the corporate existence of our country has certainly heightened since, 1999 following the nefarious activities of the dreaded Boko Haram sect who unleash havoc on the innocent citizens especially the Northern parts of Nigeria which share border with our neighbouring countries namely Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Benin Republic. In fact, the outcome of the inflow of the migrants is not palatable to the corporate existence of our Nation- Nigeria security wise hence this study.

It is in the light of the above that Dovgopolov (2009), maintained that internal security involves ensuring the protection of the vital interests of the individual, society and the state in different spheres of internal and external threats. That is to say that internal security is formed through the combination of three interdependent levels: Citizen Security, public safety and security of the state as a whole. Citizen security is ensured by the compliance with the constitutional rights and freedoms improving the quality and standard of living, providing and supporting the physical, spiritual and intellectual development. While, public safety is the protection of the material, spiritual, and cultural values and by extension augment the citizens' enrichment in guaranteed freedom of social groups and protection from external and internal threats, providing defence capability, constitutional order, protection of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political and economic stability which improves the quality of lives of the citizens of the country. In fact, the need for concerted approach by the Nigerian government and its citizenry to end the infiltration of terrorists, bandits, herdsmen and other illegal aliens from across the borders cannot be over emphasized. The precarious nature of our porous border is such that allows influx of people with different socio-economic, political and religious background to come into our country to perpetuate all sort of crimes ranging from killing, to maiming and destruction of both private livelihoods and the national economy. The most annoying part of it is that, some of these migrants have successfully infiltrated into institutions and communities which supposed to deal with such illegal and violent activities. For instance, nationals of other African Countries especially Nigeria's West African neighbours who illegitimately migrated into the country have acquired citizenship and enrol in critical national programmes. To buttress this fact, in some part of the Northern Nigeria which happened to be the epicentre of Boko Harram terrorists, some peoples' surname are link to their local government and such people are not Nigerians by origin but have either by omission or commission acquired citizenship. So Nigeria is without a doubt a country under attack from illicit aliens.

Therefore, permit me to point out here that the cross border activities of Nigeria and her neighbouring countries since independence has been bedevilled by controversies and worrisome security challenges that sparked diplomatic rows and near war experiences; Of course, involuntary Transboundary migration which allows for women and child trafficking, abduction etc is caused by the porosity of our borderline. Meanwhile, the objective of this paper is to examine the socio-economic cum political implications of Transboundary migration on our internal security; ascertain the porosity of Nigeria's border and its effect on the corporate existence of our Nation-State and by extension proffer way forward and by so doing, we must have fulfilled our mandate of filling the vacuum generated in the course of paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transboundary Migration and Internal Security Revisited

Transboundary Migration

Terminologically, the concept of transboundary migration is problematic. The meaning of the term depends on the context and who is making the definition. However, King and Debono (2013) contends that, be it irregular, illegal, undocumented, unauthorised, clandestine, all these are adjectives applied to the words transboundary migration and migrants to imply that something is wrong and needs to be controlled or fixed (King & Debono 2013, p.3). In the same vein, irregular transboundary migration is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which can be referred to the way and manner an immigrant enters into a country, or motive behind the entry into a country, residential status there, nature and type of occupation.

Thus, "Irregular transboundary migration is a complex and diverse concept that requires careful clarification" (Koser, 2005, p.6). Nevertheless, irregular transboundary migration is considered suitable within the context of this paper to be more preferable to other terms like asylums seekers, refugees, undocumented migrants, and unauthorised migrants etc. Therefore, irregular transboundary migration is used specifically in the context of this paper to denote illegal transborder migration from the state of origin to the receiving state. However, illegal carries a pejorative connotation and reveals an explicit criminalisation of the migrant's situation of either entry or residence, or both (King & Debono, 2013, p.3). The use of the term illegal can be criticised in at least three ways. First is its association with criminal behaviours. However, most irregular migrants are not criminals. Second, tagging someone as illegal can also be regarded as stripping them of their humanity. Thirdly, is the likelihood that defining individuals as illegal asylum seekers who find themselves in an irregular situation may further endanger their asylum claims (Koser, 2005).

On the other hand, internal security has been one of the strongest alternative paradigms emerging in international relations. Human security combines security, development and human rights, changing the referent for security from the state to the human (Estevens, 2019, p. 108). However, due to the absence of an empirical analytical framework, human security remains a somehow fuzzy

concept that requires a greater understanding of what it is today in a very different global environment than the one existing by the end of twentieth century when the concept first came into limelight (Estevens, 2019). Human security challenges the dominant paradigm of internal security existing since the Peace of Westphalia, but do not completely cast it overboard. Estevens (2019) argue that, "human security as internal security, has a global, preventive and cooperative nature and it is complementary to internal security. So far, the later tends to prevail when states deal with the transboundary migration-security nexus, especially during a crisis scenario (p.108).

Transboundary Migration and Internal Security

In political and media discourses, irregular Transboundary migration is often described as constituting a threat to state sovereignty. Thus, states have the sovereign right to check the flow of aliens who cross their borders, however, failure to check the flow of irregular migrants threaten national sovereignty. That is to say stopping irregular Transboundary migration is amount to reasserting full sovereignty (Koser, 2005). In certain, more extreme discourses, irregular transboundary migration has also been perceived as a threat to state security (Koser, 2005, p.10). Yet, a view from economic perspective entails that, irregular transboundary migration is actually quite functional for many destination states. As a result of deregulation, liberalisation there is demand for various forms of unskilled and semi-skilled labour employed under precarious conditions. Therefore, irregular migrants provide a cheap source of labour and are often willing to work in sectors in which regular migrants and nationals are not (Koser, 2005).

However, the emergence of organised criminal networks around illegal Transboundary migration can also pose a significant challenge to state authority and control (Adamson, 2006, p.178). For instance, in cross-border transboundary migration from Bangladesh into north-east India, it is claimed that among the illegal migrants, many militants are also present, who cross into India to carry out terrorist activities. Therefore, the influx of illegal migrants in a large number into the India's north-east region ensue a scenario of radicalism and network of fundamentalist campaigns. This in turn seriously affected both state security and human security in the north-east (Das, 2022). According to Das (2022, p.108), North-East India represents a complex arena of foreign involvement. He showed that there was outbreak of several ethnic insurgencies in the region where Pakistan, China, Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh have played a role in the region. The terrorist organisations operating in the region have formed linkages with both state and non-state actors in foreign countries. These linkages have provided valuable assistance, which include financial and organisational support, weapons, training and operational cooperation.

Moreso, Pakistan's ISI has been active in Bangladesh supporting militant movements in the North East. "Arms were primarily emerging from Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand while money was flowing in from nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) (Das, 2022, p. 108). Moreover, remote and isolated border town of Moreh, in the north eastern region frontier, immediately adjacent to Myanmar has turned into a trafficking hotspot in the recent years. Previously, Moreh, situated in Manipur was a source of trafficking victims, a transit area from where women and under-aged girls from Manipur were trafficked to other provinces of India as well as to countries in Southeast Asia, to work in the sex trade. Also, in 2019 and thereafter men and woman from Nepal were being sent to Southeast Asia, West Asia and the Middle East via Moreh which is now a transit point for drug smuggling and human trafficking (Das, 2022, p. 109).

Coming down to Africa, illegal immigrants in Malawi engaged in cross-border crime like drug and goods trafficking, and the common drug trafficked is cannabis alleged to be grown in Nkhata Bay and Nkhota Kota (Nkhoma, 2020). Illegal immigrants seem to organise this in collaboration with Malawians. Women and Children are often abducted using false agreements and once taken are exploited as sexual workers and children labour (Nkhoma, 2020). Organised crimes in the form of armed robbery and car hijacking are also committed by some illegal immigrants in Malawi. Armed robbers from neibouring Tanzania and Zambia engaged in stealing vehicles and smuggled them to Zambia through Hewe and Jenda (Nkhoma, 2020). There have also been cases in which migrants have increased pressure on the region's social amenities, such as land, medical care and education. For instance, in Chipita, 60 illegal immigrants felled sick in August 2012 as result to long journey and hunger, and were all admitted at Chitipa hospital which lacked the capacity to accommodate them due to limited bed space for patients. This provoked public outcry from the people of Chitipa who felt it was unjustifiable for them to lack access to hospital beds due to the presence of illegal immigrants (Nkhoma, 2020).

2.3 Porous Nigerian Borders and Transboundary migration

For decades irregular transboundary migration has become threats to internal security in Nigeria, especially movements across its borders. Illegal cross-border transboundary migration is believed to have adverse implication on Nigeria internal security. According to Adetula, (2009), violent crimes such as armed robbery, car theft and smuggling in northeastern border regions are allegedly linked with the presence of immigrants from neighbouring countries, especially Niger and Chad around the fringes of Lake Chad Basin and in cities like Jalingo, JimetaYola, Gashua, Dikwa, Mubi, Gembu, Damaturu, Maiduguri etc. Local media are full of reports where assailants are said to speak languages unknown in Nigeria (p.282).

The porosity of Nigerian borders is one of the major reasons behind her security issues and also one of the factors responsible for illegal cross-border Transboundary migration (Adepoju, 2009; Robert, 2014). According to Adetula (2009) "between 1975 and 1982, Nigeria had received an estimated two to three million undocumented migrants, mainly from Ghana, Togo and Benin" (p.270). Available data on cross-border crimes in West Africa such as human trafficking, drug trafficking and livestock poaching

show that transnational social networks can have serious negative effects on internal security. In Nigeria, political leaders and government officials including law enforcement officials have accused migrants from other West African countries for breaching various security laws (Adetula, 2015).

Illegal cross-border Transboundary migration and frequent security threats have become issues synonymous with Nigerian borders, which have been characterised as porous and weak. Prolonged political discourses in Nigeria have been centred on repeated calls for a more effective and efficient border management paradigm, a paradigm that ensures borders to withstand crossborder security threats. However, such calls have fallen short of calling for the securitisation of the borders. The porosity nature of Nigerian borders has rendered it susceptible to illegal Transboundary migration which have become a threat to its internal security. According to Adetula (2015), clandestine, illegal or undocumented Transboundary migration is rampant in West Africa and Nigeria is a major receptor of labour migrants. Nigeria's buoyant economy makes it attractive to many West African migrants especially from the less developed countries. Of course, there is also the problem of its porous borders. Virtually all the border entry points in Nigeria are used for drug trafficking, illegal Transboundary migration, trafficking in persons, and illicit arms transfer into the country. Media reports have implicated some migrants from neighbouring West African countries in civil disturbance, urban and rural violence, theft, armed robbery and general insecurity of lives and property. For example, all the land and sea borders in Nigeria were closed few days to the 2015 national elections to prevent influx of illegal migrants (p.9).

The "influx of illegal migrants into the country without proper records and documentation has contributed to the security challenges in Nigeria, as some of them have been alleged to engage in criminal activities such as armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping, herder and farmer clashes, terrorism etc (Udeh & Nwokorobia, 2021, p.69). For instance, the north-eastern towns of Damaturu and Maiduguri is suffused with multiple secrete routes that links other neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Chad and Niger which further link to other countries like Libya, Mali, and Sudan. These secrete routes lack security presence and are primarily used for illegal exchange or purchase of arms and other businesses that are considered illegal (Tabi & Ndum, 2020).

Frequent media reports on insecurity of lives and property as well as all sort of crimes in Nigeria revealed even to people outside Nigeria the security threats facing Nigeria today. According to Adetula (2009) local media reports tend to blame this situation on immigrants from neighbouring countries. Therefore, the key areas in which illegal immigrants from West African countries allegedly threaten the security of Nigeria are economic disorder, criminal violence, and religious sectarianism (Adetula, 2009). Irregular Transboundary migration is considered as a threat to internal security in Nigerian security strategy (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). By and large, the 2020 Nigerian Internal security Strategy Development indicates that "the protection of the Nigerian people and territory, national defence, internal security, terrorism and counterterrorism, preventing and combating kidnapping, and armed banditry" (Laseinde, 2020, p.1). However, Nigeria's inadequately secured land and maritime frontiers have resulted in multiple illegal border crossings and irregular Transboundary migration associated with transnational crimes, illegal movement of arms and terrorists (Estevens, 2019). For instance, security threats that stem from activities of illegal migrants are drug/human trafficking, terrorism, cattle rustling, attacks on farming communities by transnational nomadic herdsmen from neighbouring countries (Mahmoud & Augustine, 2022).

The earliest threat to internal security and human security in Nigeria as a result of illegal Transboundary migration was in the 1980s. Aliens, predominantly from countries in the Sahel and Western Sahara, have been associated with religious insurrection in Nigeria (Adetula, 2015). "The notion that immigrants contribute to religious conflicts has gained ground especially in official circles. They received significant public attention in the 1980s with incidents of religious disturbance in Kano, Maiduguri and Kaduna. Unfortunately, the trend has continued to date with incredible intensity" (Adetula, 2015, p.11). The leader of the Islamic movement that started the Kano disturbances in December 1980 was an illegal immigrant named Muhammadu Marwa also known as Maitatsine from Cameroon. His adherents challenged the authority of the state and demanded absolute obedience to Marwa. The disturbances led to thousands of deaths, including Marwa. More than 1,000 persons were arrested, among which 224 migrants (Adetula, 2009).

Transboundary Migration and Boko Haram Insurgency

According to Adetula (2009) "amidst the break of ethno-religious crises in parts of Northern Nigeria in October 2001, officials of the transboundary migration Department arrested some foreigners in Benue State capital with fake transboundary migration documents. They were suspected of planning a religious crisis" (Adetula, 2009, p.282). Illegal flow of arms into Nigeria has contributed both to the increase in the number of violent conflicts in the country and also to their intensity. Nigeria accounts for about 70% of the illegal small arms in the West Africa sub-region. These arms are sourced from within West Africa and also from world supply of arms through the collaboration of Nigerians and foreigners (Adetula, 2015). The findings of the various Judicial Commission of Inquiry set up by the government to investigate the remote causes of religious insurrection indicate that there were pockets of external influence and the involvement of immigrants from neighbouring countries (Adetula, 2015). Prominent among cross-border security threats is the activities of Boko Haram which "obviously constitutes serious threat to human security, economic development, internal security and political stability in Nigeria. The impact of the insurgency is being felt in all aspects of Nigeria's existence including its defence, security and external relations" (Adetula, 2015, p.13).

Arms smuggling also constitute another existential security threat. It is provided that, cross-border smuggling is the principal source of importation of illegal arms and ammunitions into Nigeria. For example, in August 26, 2009, 95 pump-action guns being smuggled into the country were discovered at the Idi-roko border, this might not unconnected with problem of weak border control, supervision, and liberalisation (Babatunde, 2009). It is estimated that, according to Osimen et al, (2017) “over 70% of about 8 to 10 million illegal weapons in West Africa is in Nigeria. The degree of illegal procurement and use of SALWs in Nigeria is recorded by the sporadic capture of SALWs by security and border control agents, the frequency of deployment of these arms in conflict and crime areas, and the extent of human casualty and destruction of properties reported the consequences of its use in the country (Osimen et al, 2017).

For instance, the volume of arms relinquished during the disarmament and demobilisation (DD) phase of the Amnesty programme for the Niger Delta militants in 2009 gave an idea of the quantum of SALWs proliferation in the country. in the course of the Amnesty initiative over 15000 militants gave up their arms at the expiration of the DD phase of the Amnesty. Weapons collected during the disarmament process included 2760 assorted guns, 287445 ammunitions of different calibre, 18 gun-boats, 763 dynamite sticks, 1090 dynamite caps, and 3155 magazines (Osimen et al, 2017).

Another implication of irregular Transboundary migration into Nigeria is armed banditry, mostly perpetuated by armed bandits from Benin, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger Republics, cars and goods are stolen and taken to these countries and vice versa. For instance, in 2002 former President Obasanjo’s daughter, Iyabo, escaped death from assassins who killed two teenage girls in her car along Benin border. An act perpetuated by syndicate leader Hammani Tidjani, which led to the closure of Nigerian borders by the government on August 9-15, 2003. It was not opened until the gang leader was repatriated to Nigeria for prosecution and subsequent imprisonment (Babatunde, 2009). Other cross-border related crimes that have many security complications for Nigerian internal security is include the activities of illegal migrants such as illegal lumbering and poaching, bunkering of petroleum products, piracy by illegal immigrants alongside the activities. They also embark upon expatriate hostage taking, kidnapping, terrorism, and armed robbery which has instill fear of insecurity among the people (Babatunde, 2009). Furthermore, oil theft with the complicity of transnational actors threatens Nigeria’s internal security and economic interests. The volume of theft of Nigerian oil, both on land and on the sea, is estimated to be 100,000 barrels per day (during the first quarter of 2013) (Adetula, 2015, p.13). The persistent cases of illegal cross-border Transboundary migration, some of whom are suspected to be Fulani herdsmen migrating from neighbouring countries especially Chad constitute a serious threat to human security in Nigeria. Therefore, Benue state has been the most affected in Nigeria by the activities of these immigrant, as it has claimed many lives, and many properties have been destroyed. Local governments Areas such as Agatu, Guma, Gwer West,

Makurdi, Kwande, Katsina-Ala and Loggo. The violence perpetuated by the Fulani herdsmen in Benue has claimed hundreds of lives since 2014 and recently about 73 people were killed (Segun, & Ufuoma, 2018). According to Segun & Ufuoma (2018) Fulani herdsmen have destroyed more than 80 communities and families, thereby making them refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Makurdi. In March 2016, over 500 individuals were killed when 10 communities in the Agatu Local Government Area were completely destroyed by the Fulani herdsmen.

Another area that remains an existential threat to internal security and human security in Nigeria is Human Trafficking, mostly of children for the purpose of prostitution and exploitative labour, which is widespread issue in Nigeria. It is reported that, “foreign children trafficked to Nigeria come mainly from Benin and Togo (an estimated 96%, with 90% of that figure coming from Benin alone), Cote d’Ivoire and Niger. Children as young as five and six years trafficked from Benin have been found working in exploitative conditions in Nigeria mines in the Western part of the country” (Osimen et al, 2017, p.23). UNDOC (2006) contends that “trafficked girls are used for domestic services or street trading as well as commercial sexual exploitation while boys are generally forced to work on plantations or in commercial farming, construction, quarries and mines or engaged in petty crimes and drug trade” (as cited in Osimen et al, 2017, p.23). In addition to this is drug trafficking, the commonly trafficked drugs include heroine, cannabis, cocaine and synthetic drugs. The drugs find their ways into the country as a result of the porous borders and poor security in the airports. According official figures from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), 37% of Kano State’s population are drug abusers and the state also has the highest number of people arrested for illicit drug trafficking (Osimen et al, 2017).

Border management in way and manner that promotes internal security should be one of the primary preoccupations of every state. However, Nigeria’s internal security strategy is not given utmost priority in terms of implementation. The negligence of border security and poor border management in Nigeria has largely contributed to a prevalence of threats such as cross-border crimes by irregular migrants. When borders cease to function effectively, myriads number of security threats prevail, therefore the security of the state or its citizens will be endangered this is due to fact that borders constitute the most visible emblem of state sovereignty presence along its borders.

Theoretical Orientation

In order to provide analytical insight that established a nexus between illegal Transboundary migration and security threats, the paper adopt securitisation theory developed within the framework of the Copenhagen School (CS) of Security Studies. The securitisation theory was developed by Buzan, Woever, & de Wilde (1998). The theory is based on the idea that in international

relations something becomes an object of urgent policy not because it represents a danger, but because an influential actor proclaims it as a serious threat (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998). The CS describes securitisation as the intersubjective and socially constructed process by which a threat to a particular referent object is acknowledged and considered worth protecting (Buzan, 1997). Thus, “the exact definition and criteria of securitisation is constituted by the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects (Buzan., Waever, & de Wilde, 1998, p. 23). The CS understanding of securitisation implies that anything that has been labeled or viewed as dangerous, inimical, threatening, alarming must be dealt with in an exceptional and urgent manner (Charrett, 2009; Mlambo & Adetiba, 2020). According to Buzan (1997, p.13-14), the CP constitutes a more radical view of security studies by exploring threats to referent objects, and the securitisation of these threats, that are nonmilitary as well as military. Threats and vulnerabilities can arise in many different areas, military and non-military, but in order to count as security issues they have meet strictly defined criteria that distinguish them from the normal run of the merely political. They have to be stage as existential threats to referent objects by a securitising actor who thereby generates endorsement for emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind. In other words, issues become securitised when leader begin to talk about them.

Security is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics (Buzan., Waever & de Wilde, 1998, p. 23). Securitisation theory suggests that internal security policy is not naturally given, but consciously designated by politicians and decision-makers. According to securitisation theory, political issues are constituted as extreme security issues to be dealt with urgently when they have been tagged as national emergency by securitising actor who has the social and institutional power to carry the problem beyond politics. Therefore, security issues are not simply out there but rather must be articulated as problems by securitising actors (Buzan, 1991).

The securitisation theory contended that, “what can be clearly observed is that, the state is less important in the new security agenda than in the old. It still remains central, but no longer dominates either as exclusive referent object or as the principal embodiment of threats in the way it did previously” (Buzan, 1997, p.11). Foe example a range of new referent objects for security and sources of threats is being set up above, below and alongside the state (Buzan, 1997, p.12). It is important to note that securitising actors are not limited to politicians. Security professionals like the police, intelligence services, customs, transboundary migration services, border guards and the military all play an important role in defining the security landscape (Eroukhmanoff, 2018, p.3). However, other school of thoughts challenged the view of securitisation, for instance, the Welsh School which developed within the Emancipatory theory, which was first championed by K. Booth in the early 1990s, advocated a universal security system in which the individual, not the states and nations, plays a central role (Shapoval., Nastyuk., Bezpalova. & Khrystynchenko, 2018). The proponent of de-securitisation of the Paris School pioneered by Foucault and Bourdieu, questioned the view of the of the CS arguing that securitisation is not the result of a successful public act, but every day bureaucratic decisions, the use of technology and the Weberian practice of rationalisation (Shapoval et al, 2018, p. 46).

However, despite the criticisms levelled against Securitisation Theory, the assumptions of theory serve as useful framework of analysis within the context of this study. Therefore, the assumptions of the securitisation theory have coincided with increasing political rhetoric in Nigeria and the need to effectively manage the porosity of Nigerian border in order to checkmate influx of illegal migrants. Moreover, defining irregular transboundary migration a threat to internal security and human security for instance, shifts transboundary migration from a low priority political concern to a high priority issue that requires action, such as border security.

METHODOLOGY

We adopted the *ex-post facto* research design which is a form of research undertaken after the events have taken place and the data are already in existence. The study in its analysis solely relied upon relevant secondary sources to draw the implication of irregular Transboundary migration on internal security in Nigeria. The data were collected through library research from scholarly articles, textbooks, journals, seminars and conference papers, government reports, media accounts, publications of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and internet sourced materials that are relevant to the study. The study adopted documentary method of data collection which is basically a tool used in obtaining information from the secondary source.

Thematic content analysis was employed to analyse the data which involved reading through the data, identifying and classifying themes and explaining the meaning of these themes by connecting them with the aim of the study.

Transboundary Migration and Boko Haram Insurgency Under Buhari

Some of the respondents associated the increasing violence between herders and farmers across Nigeria to other international conflicts but particularly the ones located within the African sub-region. A community leader in Ekiti State traced the current increase in violence to the Libyan civil war, which ousted and eventually led to the killing of Col. Muammar Gaddafi, the former Libyan strongman. He explained that before that catastrophic event, Libya was the hotbed of small firearms in Africa but these firearms were contained within the country because of the strong leadership provided by Gaddafi. However, following Gadhafi's, death, these arms were smuggled out and were being used to cause trouble throughout the continent of Africa. Through Nigeria's porous borders in the north, and the agency of Boko Haram and other affiliate terrorist groups, these arms have gotten into Nigeria and are behind the escalating violence between farmers and herders. Another peace and security expert from Enugu State maintained

that the people marauding through the length and breadth of Nigeria, especially in the Middle-belt and Southern Nigeria, raiding, raping, kidnapping and murdering farmers, are not the real Fulani herders we used to know. According him, the said herders were Islamic fighters and Boko Haram infiltrators who entered the zones as herders to continue their quest to capture and convert Nigeria into a homeland for the Fulani in African.

A Fulani herder interviewed in Benue State also lent credence to this. He explained that in recent years, the local herders in Benue State have experienced the rise in the presence of foreign and heavily armed herders. They came to know this because all herders in Benue State belong to a registered umbrella association that caters for the welfare of herders in the state and also ensured that disputes with farmers were speedily resolved before they escalate into violence. The Fulani group was a national association with branches all over the states of the Nigerian Federation such that any herder or group of herders who disobeyed the state branch can be reported to the national body for disciplinary actions. However, because these new herders didn't care to register with the organization at the state level and are heavily armed, they are very difficult to deal with. He submitted that these foreign herders were the ones responsible for the spike in violence.

In addition, the respondents blamed the porous borders between Nigeria and neighbouring countries, which was the consequence of the lackadaisical attitude of the Nigerian government, as responsible for the escalating conflict. According to a peace and security expert from Kaduna State, Nigerian borders with other countries, particularly in the northern parts of the country were so porous that people easily came in and out of the country unchallenged. He maintained that this lack of well-policed borders made herdsman from all over the Sahel region to troop into and find Nigeria more attractive and conducive than neighboring countries like Ghana, Togo and Benin Republic. Another respondent, a farmer and butcher from Delta State supporting this submission averred that foreign herders who entered Nigeria unchecked because of the porous borders caused most of the recent conflicts between farmers and herders all over the country, but especially in Delta state. According to him, he has been in the business of farming and abattoir operation for more than 30 years. As such he knew most of the herders as he has transacted businesses with most of them. Recently however, in about the past five years, there have been new arrival of Fulani herders who could not understand or speak English because of their foreign origin but who were also completely unknown to the local Fulani who have lived in Delta State for years. He believed that the current crisis, including the destruction of farm lands, raiding of farming communities and kidnapping in Delta State were the result of these new entrants.

Herders' Cross-border Migration and Insecurity in Nigeria Under Buhar

More factors fingered as responsible for the southward movement of herders in Nigeria are increase in farming activities and underdevelopment of grazing lands. According to a farmer interviewed in Kaduna, a state in Northwest Nigeria, which has seen some of the fiercest conflicts between farmers and herders; one of the reasons herders from the Sahel and most northern states are migrating to southern Nigeria, is due to commercialization of Agriculture, which now made it possible for farmers to farm large hectares of land. He maintained that this problem could have been handled by maintaining and enforcing the grazing routes and reserves created before the recent increase in farming activities in the north. The inability or lack of will by the government to maintain these grazing reserves and routes has made farmers encroach on lands previously used by herders resulting in the current escalation of violence all over the country between the two groups. This was also supported by the FGDs in Kaduna, Adamawa and Benue. Whereas respondents in Benue in discussing how lack of grazing routes and reserves contributed to the problem made the point that herding is a private business and, therefore, the state shouldn't be using private and communal lands for grazing purposes, contributors from Kaduna and Adamawa believed that herding was important to Nigerian economic development and, therefore, that herders should be aided by the state just as governments in other countries provide subsidy for their farmers and herders.

In agreement with this position, a report by the UN on Environment as cited by Blench (2010) explains that the Fulani group has a long history of migrating, and they have built relationships with various farming populations in Nigeria. Also, the Fulani are known for herding cattle, goats and sheep across the vast dry grasslands of their environment. However, today, available grazing lands are decreasing, and livestock pathways are blocked in many areas. Only a small portion of the grazing reserves was acquired, and they are poorly managed. Blench (2010) also noted that the causes of the crises have been traceable to the policy gap and underdevelopment of grazing lands.

Nweke (2021) also observes that the Government's strategic response to the Farmers-Herders crisis so far include creation of Grazing Reserves which started in 1965. In 1965, the northern regional government initiated one of the first attempts to respond to the herdsman-farmers crisis in the country. The grazing reserves allocated large portions of land to be exclusively used by herders to rear their livestock. However, the grazing reserve system was not supported adequately. The government was still in the process of initiating legislations to legitimize the grazing reserves before natural factors such as population growth and other related consequences like urbanization and migration encroached on these designated areas reducing the herders' chances of accessing the reserves. Another effort was the establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) in 1989. The federal government in 1989 established the NCNE as supported by the Nigerian legal system. The main goal of the programme was to integrate nomadic pastoralists into national life through mobile basic education and skill acquisition. The programme intended to integrate them into the society through education.

Another and more recent attempt by the government is the establishment of the National Grazing Reserve Bill of 2016. This bill was specifically sponsored at the parliament to address the herdsmen-farmers conflicts. The Bill like previous attempts did not survive due to opposition from different stakeholders. Those that opposed the Bill hinged their rejection on the provision of the Land Use Act of 1978, which vests all powers related to the regulation, ownership, acquisition, administration, and management of Nigerian land with the state governors. Thus, the Land Use Act is an Act of the National Assembly, and by implication, a binding legislation, unless it is amended. State governments and their representatives at the parliament have always opposed any attempt to establish grazing reserves in their domain. They consider it to be usurping the constitutional powers vested in them.

In reaction to increasing conflicts and mass killings resulting from seasonal pastoral movements, the government in 2018, as a matter of policy, approved a 10-year National Livestock Plan at a cost of about 179 billion naira. The plan would culminate in the establishment of 94 ranches in 10 pilot states of the federation. Again, the state governments, especially in the South and North-central areas rejected the proposal on the grounds of not having enough space for such projects.

Governments at the state level have also enacted legislation prohibiting open grazing in their states. This, they hope, would reduce risk of herdsmen destruction of farmlands and the associated conflicts. Benue, Ekiti and Taraba states are leading this opposition by enacting state laws prohibiting open grazing. On May 22, 2017, Benue state enacted the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law (2017) and its implementation began on November 1, 2017. Ekiti and Taraba states have also signed Bills prohibiting open grazing in their states. This makes open grazing under any guise, an illegal activity punishable by law (Ogugua, 2021).

In 2013, the Federal government established the Great Green Wall Agency to tackle desertification. This was in response to the 2007 African Union Great Green Wall initiative that aimed at encouraging member states to plant 8,000km of trees along the Southern Sahel to counter the effects of desertification along the area. Continued desert encroachment along the Sahel region as a result of climate change is a major factor responsible for the seasonal migration of herdsmen from one region to the other in search of water and vegetation for grazing cattle. Besides, the recent RUGA settlement initiative introduced in Nigeria, even though it met with serious criticisms by Nigerians, is also part of government's response to the crisis. Nevertheless, all these efforts have not succeeded in dealing with the problem of increase in farming activities and underdevelopment of grazing routes and reserves which both the interviewees and participants of the FGDs in this survey and available literature agree are contributing to the conflict (Neethirajan, S. & Kemp, B. 2021).

Efforts of the State in Management of Transboundary Migration in Nigeria Under Buhari

Border security and management is essential to a state aim at securing its population against what is consider threats to internal security. The first measure taken by the Nigerian in order to checkmate the influx of illegal migrants into the country was in the 1980s. According to Adetula (2009) "the economic recession of the 1980s led to a decline in the overall demand for foreign labour in many of the migrant-receiving countries in West Africa. During this period, public opinion and government pronouncements became sensitive to the presence of undocumented migrants" (p.269). Thus, Nigeria, being one of the main receiving countries in West Africa, embarked on anti-transboundary migration measures one of which intensification of check on the influx of immigrants, expulsion of illegal aliens and also border closures (Adetula 2009).

According to Afolayan 1988 the "transboundary migration Act of 1963 and the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1972 were used to explain the expulsion of an estimated 1.3 million immigrants in 1983, including 700,000 Ghanaians" (as cited in Adetula 2009, p.269). It is further explained that, an insignificant number of aliens employed in the private sector possessed residence permits. However, the vast majority were in violation of section 8 (1) of the 1963 transboundary migration Act which prohibits private sector employment of non-Nigerians unless with the written consent of the director of transboundary migration. Therefore, this was considered as flagrant abuse of Nigeria's laws which can no longer be tolerated West Africa, 7 February 1983, as cited in Adetula 2009).

Another response to illegal Transboundary migration into Nigeria was border closure imposed by the then former president Olusegun Obasanjo. And this was because of cross border crime in 2003 involving an international robbery network, whose gang leader, a Beninois national whose operations posed an existential threat to internal security and threat to the customs and security operatives in Nigeria. The former President had to order the closure of the borders at least two times. It was only reopened after President of Benin Republic Mathieu Kerekou personally ordered the handing over of the gang leader Hamani Tijani to Nigerian authorities to face criminal charges (Adeola & Fayomi, 2012; Osimen et al, 2017). In another move by President Muhammadu Buhari aimed at checking the influx of irregular migrants into Nigeria, the President ordered the partial closure of all Nigerian land borders with her neighbours such as Benin Republic, Cameroun, Chad and Niger (Udeh & Nwokorobia, 2021). The land border closure which started on the 20th August, 2019 and lasted for sixteen months. This policy on border closure was as a result of the federal government's growing concern over influx of illegal migrants into the country, trafficking in human beings (especially women and children) and drugs, proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), and the need to strengthen internal security (Udeh & Nwokorobia, 2021, p.64).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study is an attempt to analyse the implication of irregular Transboundary migration in Nigeria within the prevailing discourse of trans-internal security threats that emanate for irregular Transboundary migration. The major observation of this paper is that influx of irregular migrants and its associated security threats constitute a serious security threat to both national and human security in Nigeria. It is also a fact that most immigrants originate from neighbouring countries of West Africa therefore remain an existential security threat to both national and human security in Nigeria. Besides, the illegality of their presence undermines the state sovereignty, most especially through the insurgent activities Boko Haram. Recognising the security threats irregular migrants cause to both national and human security, the government seldom imposed ad hoc measures through which entry points were blocked and illegal immigrants were expelled from the country.

From the foregoing, the study recommends among others that;

1. As a matter of national priority, government should take securitization of national borders seriously.
2. Government should also formulate effective policy on irregular border Transboundary migration which requires the adoption of a balanced and holistic approach involving all law enforcement agencies that are responsible for border security.
3. The government needs to stamp out corruption, as well as intensify the closure of the prevailing secrete routes in the country. Furthermore, a multinational approach to trans-internal security Threats is paramount in dealing with illegal transboundary migration. Since the problem of transboundary migration is transitional, concerted efforts have to be made at regional level and not just at national level. That is to say Nigeria must show commitment to working at both bilateral and multilateral levels, with other countries within the West African sub-region to address the menace of trans-internal security threats perpetuated by activities of irregular migrants.

REFERENCES

1. Adamson, F. B. (2006). Crossing borders: international Transboundary migration and internal security. *Interinternal security*, 31(1), pp. 165-199. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4137542>.
2. Adeola, G. L. & Fayomi, O. (2012). The political and security implications of cross border Transboundary migration between Nigeria and her francophone neighbours. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, 1(3), pp.1-9.
3. Adetula V. A. O. (2009). West African labour migrants and internal security in Nigeria. *African Studies in Geography from Below*.
4. Adetula, V. A.O. (2015). Nigeria's response to transnational organised crime and jihadist activities in West Africa. Discussion Paper: No. 10, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
5. Babatunde, O. A. (2009). Internal security and Transboundary migration: towards an effective cross-border management in Nigeria. International Organization for Transboundary migration (IOM). Transboundary migration in Nigeria: Thematic Paper 2009.
6. Blum, C. (2014). Cross-border flows between Nigeria and Benin: what are the challenges for (human) security? Abuja, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
7. Buzan, B. & Hansen, L. (2009). *The evolution of interinternal security studies*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
8. Buzan, B. (1991). New patterns of global security in the twenty-first century. *International affairs*, 67(3), pp.431-451.
9. Buzan, B. (1997). Rethinking security after the cold war. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 32(2), pp, 5- 28. DOI: 10.1177/0010836797032001001.
10. Buzan, B., Waever, O. & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a new framework for analysis*. United States of America, Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.
11. Charrett, C. (2009). A critical application of securitization theory: overcoming the normative dilemma of writing security. Institut Catala Internacional per la Pau.
12. Das, S. N. (2022). Cross-border Transboundary migration and its long-term implications: a study of Transboundary migration in North-East India. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies*, 8(2). DOI: 10.29032/ijhsss.v8.i2.2022.100-111.
13. Egwu, S. (2011). Ethno- religious conflicts and internal security in Nigeria: illustrations from the "Middle Belt". In Adejumobi, S. (ed), State, economy, and society in post-military Nigeria, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
14. Eroukhmanoff, C. (2018). *Securitisation theory: an introduction*. An excerpt from International Relations Theory - an E-IR Foundations beginner's textbook.
15. Estevens, J. (2019). Human (in)security and irregular Transboundary migration: the atlantic basin. In Teixeira, N. S. & Marcos, D. (eds): *Evolving Human Security Challenges in the Atlantic Space*. Jean Monnet Network on Atlantic Studies.
16. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). Internal security Strategy. Retrieved from <http://ctc.gov.ng/nigerian-national-security-strategy-2014/>.
17. Koser, K. (2005). Irregular Transboundary migration, state security and human security. Global Commission on International Transboundary migration (GCIM).

18. King, R. & Debono, D. (2013). Irregular Transboundary migration and the 'Southern European Model' of Transboundary migration. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 22(1), pp.1-31.
19. Laseinde, L. (2020). Internal security strategy development: Nigeria case study. Working Paper.
20. Mahmoud, A. T. & Augustine, A. C. (2022). Transboundary migration, border issues and border control in Nigeria: patterns, implications and management. *FUOYE Journal of Criminology and Security Studies*, 3(1), pp. 87- 95.
21. Mlambo, V. H. & Adetiba, T. C. (2020). Illegal Transboundary migration and cross border crimes: reflecting on the challenges of south African borders. *Loyola Journal of Social Sciences*, 34(2), pp.94- 113.
22. Morgethau, H. (1960). *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace*, New York, 1960.
23. Nkhoma, B. G. (2020). Transnational threats: the problem of illegal imTransboundary migration in northern Malawi. *Southern African Peace and Security Studies* 1(2), pp.29-43.
24. Osimen, G. U., Anegbode, E. J., Akande, C. A, & Oyewole, O. O. (2017). The borderless-border and internal security challenges in Nigeria. *International Journal of Political Science*, 3(3), pp.17-27. doi.org/10.20431/24549452.0303003.
25. Paleri, P. (2008). *Internal security: imperatives and challenge*. New Delhi, Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited.
26. Segun, J. & Ufuoma, O. A. (2018). Border, insurgency and internal security: a study of fulani herdsmen traversing Chad and Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews*, 8(1), pp.226 - 233.
27. Shapoval, R. V., Nastyuk, V. Y., Bezpalova, O. I. & Khrystynchenko, N.P. (2018). Path towards internal security in the European Union: genesis and further development processes. *Journal of Security and Sustainability*, 8(1), pp. 4554. doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2018.8.1(4).
28. Sulovic, V. (2010). Meaning of Security and Theory of Securitization. Belgrade Centre for Security Policy.
29. Tabi, O. F. & Ndum, V. E. (2020). Cross-border Transboundary migration between Nigeria and its francophone neighbours: policy challenge. *Iconic Research and Engineering Journals*, 3(11), pp. 304- 311.
30. Udeh, S.C. & Nwokorobia, C. (2021). Land border closure: implications for internal security in Nigeria. *African Journal of Social Issues*, 4(1): 63-86. doi.org/10.4314/ajosi.v4i1.4.
31. UNDP, (1994). *Human development report*. New York: UNDP.
32. United Nations, (2008). Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, November 2008 U.S. Department of Justice